

# **Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research**

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From: The Secretariat

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## Agenda Item 22 Other Business

### **Procedures for the Selection of the Chairman of the CGIAR's Technical Advisory Committee**

This paper outlines the Secretariat's proposal for the process to be used in the selection of the next chairman of TAC, based on guidelines provided by the Co-sponsors at their meeting on October 24, 1993 and by the Group at its Heads of Donor Delegations Meeting held on October 27, 1993. The paper is for obtaining the reactions of the Group to the proposed procedures, the timetable, and the terms-of-reference and qualifications sought of the next incumbent of the position.

#### Background

Since the early days of the CGIAR, TAC has played a central role in the operations of the CGIAR. TAC's role has changed over time, but it continues to perform a number of functions essential for the health of the CGIAR.

The present Chairman of TAC, Mr. Alexander McCalla, has served the CGIAR with distinction since January 1, 1988. Mr. McCalla's term comes to an end on December 31, 1994.

The selection of the TAC Chairman has customarily been a responsibility of the Co-sponsors who served as the search and selection committee during the last TAC Chair appointment process. They have agreed to play the same role in the appointment of the next TAC Chair, including holding intensive consultations with the members of the CGIAR and the broader CGIAR community.

#### Terms-of-Reference: Functions of TAC

The terms-of-reference of the TAC Chair derives mainly from those of TAC itself. While the role and functions of TAC and other system-wide committees and bodies within the CGIAR are under study, for the purposes of this search effort--and until TAC's role is redefined--it is assumed that the functions of TAC will continue to be as noted by the current TAC Chair in connection with the CGIAR's discussion of the restructuring of TAC at ICW 1989 (the last occasion the CGIAR considered the structure of TAC --Alex McCalla, "Proposed Revisions in the Structure and Operating Mechanisms of the Technical Advisory Committee of the CGIAR", Document No: ICW/89/09, pp. 2-3):

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| <u>"Context</u>            | (a) | Monitoring changes in the global context which have implications for the CGIAR;   |
| <u>Priorities</u>          | (b) | Recommending medium and long-term strategies and priorities to the CGIAR;   |
| <u>Reviews</u>             | (c) | Evaluating the quality and relevance of CGIAR institute research and research related programs (EPRs) and monitoring compliance with approved plans and CG priorities;            |
| <u>Resource Allocation</u> | (d) | Reviewing of center programs (5-year and annual) and making recommendations to the CGIAR on resource allocation;  |
| <u>System Issues</u>       | (e) | Addressing cross-center and system issues such as stripe reviews, commodity/activity balance, regional distribution, intercenter conflicts and monitoring of system's evolution." |

### The Job of TAC Chairman

The description of the TAC Chair's job presented to the CGIAR by the Co-sponsors when the last search effort was being initiated is in the most part still accurate. In the interim the job has become more complex as a result of the expansion of the CGIAR's mandate, increases in the number of centers and donors, and the financial contraction being experienced by the system. The following description is based primarily on a 1986 paper presented to the CGIAR ("Co-sponsors' Report on Procedures for Selection of TAC Chairman", Document No: ICW/86/19).

The Chairman is the manager of a complex process, who like most managers disposes of limited resources. The most limiting resource is the time of TAC members, who generally have other full time occupations and are much in demand as leading scientists. The Chairman has a staff consisting of the TAC Executive Secretary and other professionals at the FAO. He<sup>1</sup> also has a budget provided by the three cosponsors. A major management challenge is the use of these and other resources in order to conserve the time of TAC, yet to do so in such a way that the ultimate result is a product reflecting the judgments of TAC and not those of others.

A significant part of the Chairman's management responsibility, carried out with the help of the TAC Secretariat, is planning the meetings of TAC, with their increasingly complex agendas, and organizing the participation and preparation of all those non-members who take part in meetings. A further part is chairing the actual meetings in such a way as to encourage participation including an interaction with the many observers who attend, yet guiding the Committee to decisions without waste of time.

The Chairman needs a public presence, to be able to present the views of TAC (which may at times differ somewhat from his own views) succinctly and clearly to various audiences, most importantly to the Group itself, which include people with wide differences in background concerning both the CGIAR itself and the substance of its work.

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<sup>1</sup> The reader should assume that both genders are meant in the balance of this paper.

He must maintain objectivity with regard to the issues, and resist the temptation to tell the Group what it wants to hear. The CGIAR has often signalled to TAC its desire to have unvarnished scientific judgments. This is a very difficult matter, and one on which no chairman of TAC is likely to be exempt from criticism. On the one hand, the Group cannot be in the position of constantly acting contrary to the advice of TAC. On the other hand, TAC can lose its credibility if it is not constantly challenging the Group, and indeed the whole system, to improve quality and effectiveness in spite of the practical difficulties involved. Thus the chairman must be able to separate the range of TAC's responsibilities from what must be done by others, but must have a clear appreciation of the way in which non-technical issues operate to influence final action by donors and centers.

The chairman needs a detailed personal knowledge of the work of the centers, which means he must visit centers and spend considerable time observing their work, and talking with the researchers as well as with center management and board members. This brings him into intimate involvement in the close relationships that typify the centers, into situations where he will be asked for views on matters scientific, managerial and personal. Yet at the same time he needs to maintain a distance between himself and many issues on which TAC has not taken a clear position, or which fall into the province of boards and management because they are more specific and detailed than the level of TAC's work. The same is true for all members of TAC, but in lesser degree.

He must also be able to communicate effectively with the scientific community in both the developed and the developing world outside of the centers, in countries which he knows well and in those he does not, in scientific fields with which he is familiar and in others. He must also be able to communicate effectively with non-scientists, including those who make the policy decisions affecting agricultural research in the developing countries, and affecting the allocation of funds to the Group; as well as users of research output on the farms, in both public and private sectors. As one of the few people devoting nearly full time to the affairs of the CGIAR, and because of the personal qualities and stature which any person chosen for this position will possess, the TAC Chairman will inevitably be drawn into virtually all of the important issues affecting the welfare of the Group, including many what are not the business of TAC. Thus he will constantly be called upon to exercise judgment about whether to engage in activities that he can perform with benefit to the Group, but which may affect his objective and independent status.

#### Criteria for Selection of a TAC Chairman

During the last search effort the Group concurred with the following requirements as desirable criteria for the selection of the TAC Chair:

1. Broad knowledge of agriculture in developing countries, in the context both of development and world-wide agricultural issues.
2. Eminence in one field of agricultural science, and experience with a multidisciplinary approach to scientific research, specifically including interaction with a broad range of disciplines other than his own.
3. Intimate knowledge of the CGIAR.

4. Creativity: the ability to initiate new approaches, and to work with new ideas of others.
5. Management experience, specifically direction of high level scientific talent.
6. Ability to present complex issues briefly and clearly in English.
7. Independence, sensitivity and self-control to maintain objectivity.
8. Ability to chair long and complex meetings.
9. Openness and communication skills effective with people from many cultures.
10. An image of personal stature.

In addition to these criteria, during the last search the Co-sponsors agreed to give special importance to the following six attributes:

1. An understanding of how developing countries and industrialized nations relate;
2. An understanding of how agricultural disciplines relate;
3. The ability to think strategically;
4. Possession of a vision of the future;
5. The ability to manage the human resources of TAC; and
6. The ability to express oneself articulately.

It is proposed that these two sets of criteria and attributes be amalgamated into a single set and modified to take account of the expanded mandate of the CGIAR for the purpose of announcing the position and the qualifications sought of the nominees.

#### Terms of Service

Prior to Mr. McCalla's term as TAC Chair, the job of TAC chairman was viewed as less than a full time occupation. But as the complexity of the job has grown, it has become de facto full time (or near full time), whatever the formal description may say. Therefore, the proposal is to offer the job as a full time (or near full time) one, with a contract for five years. These terms, with an appropriate salary, should make it possible to attract people with a wider range of age and career status.

The contractual relationship would be with the chairman of the CGIAR, as at present. The specific terms of service would be agreed by the Co-sponsors.

Recruitment Process  
and Schedule

The Co-sponsors and the Oversight Committee considered the option of starting the search process at or following the 1994 MTM in New Delhi, but did not find the arguments for it to be sufficiently strong. At the 1993 ICW the members of the CGIAR also expressed a desire to start the process early--as early as immediately following the 1993 Centers Week--so that a world-wide search can be conducted and sufficient lead time can be provided to the selected incumbent before he assumes the post on January 1, 1995.

The last search which led to the appointment of Mr. McCalla was initiated in April 1986, about 20 months prior to his assuming office. Starting the process this time in November 1993 would allow 14 months for the search effort. The Secretariat proposes the following steps and schedule as an approximate guide for the search process:

Oct 1993	CGIAR approves process and qualifications at the ICW
Nov 1993	Letters of solicitation mailed with request for response within two months
Dec 1993- Jan 1994	Nominations received and acknowledged; candidates asked to submit curricula vitae
Feb 1994	Nomination deadline
Feb 1994	Dossiers of candidates sent to Search Committee
Mar 1994	Search Committee meets to draw up shortlist
Mar 1994	Search Committee ascertains availability of short-listed candidates and, if necessary, adds additional names
Apr 1994	CGIAR informed by fax/e-mail of names on shortlist and comments solicited by the end of MTM 1994
May 1994	Search Committee reviews the outcome of the consultations held
June/July 1994	Search Committee interviews candidates and makes appointment; appointee given until January 1, 1995 to assume post
July 1994	Appointment announced throughout the System
Oct 1994	Appointee attends TAC meeting in Washington, D.C. as observer
1 Jan 1995	Appointee assumes TAC chairmanship